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## **The logic of Romance past participle agreement**

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ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-38631>

Book Section

Originally published at:

Loporcaro, Michele (2010). The logic of Romance past participle agreement. In: D'Alessandro, R; Ledgeway, A; Roberts, I. Syntactic Variation : The Dialects of Italy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 225-243.

## 12 The logic of Romance past participle agreement

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*Michele Loporcaro*

### 1. Introduction

Most treatments of Romance past participle agreement concentrate basically on the main standard languages.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I shall show that incorporating dialect data into the analysis leads to a better understanding of both the synchronic working and the diachronic evolution of the past participle agreement rule. In §§2–3 I shall prepare the ground by firstly summing up some widespread ideas in current analyses of participle agreement, and then by discussing a proposal by Guasti and Rizzi (2002), who put forward a division of labour between syntax and morphology in participle agreement quite different from the one advocated here. In §§4–8 I shall then expound my analysis.

### 2. Romance past participle agreement: some received ideas

As early as the sixteenth century, Clément Marot's (1496–1544) versified rule pointed to the relevance of linear order for participle agreement: 'Nostre langue a ceste façon/ Que le terme qui va devant/ Voluntiers regist le suyvant./ L'Italien (dont la faconde/ Passe les vulgaires du monde)/ Son langage a ainsi basty/ En disant: *Dio noi a fatti*' (Our language is made so, that the term that precedes often controls agreement on (literally 'governs') the one that follows. Italian, whose eloquence surpasses all vernaculars of the world, has structured its speech this way, saying: *Dio noi a fatti* 'God has made.m.pl. us'). In the principles-and-parameters framework, this translates directly into the idea that participle agreement with the DO is based on a local Spec-Head configuration, just like subject agreement. This symmetry is stated by Chomsky (1991: 436), elaborating on Kayne's (1989a) influential paper: 'object-agreement, like subject-agreement, is based upon a government relation between Agr (in this case, Agr-O) and the NP'. The French examples in (1) taken from Kayne (1989a) illustrate both the basic data and the essentials of the analysis:

<sup>1</sup> I thank the organizers of CIDS 1 for the invitation, and Anna Thornton and one anonymous referee for comments.

- 1 a Paul a Agr [<sub>VP</sub> repaint/\*-es les chaises]  
 Paul has repainted.m.sg./f.pl. the chairs.f.pl.
- b Paul les<sub>i</sub> a [<sub>e<sub>i</sub></sub>] Agr<sub>i</sub> repeintes [<sub>e<sub>i</sub></sub>]  
 Paul them.f.pl.= has repainted.f.pl.  
 'Paul has repainted them'

Under this account, object agreement in (1b) follows from the clitic's moving to SpecAgrOP, while lack of agreement in (1a) is due to the fact that the lexical DO has remained *in situ*. In minimalist accounts from the late 1990s onwards, agreement is understood as Case-checking (rather than assignment), and the structural locus for checking is now the specifier of the past participle (e.g. in Belletti 2001b) or [Spec, *v*P] (e.g. in Ledgeway (2000), adopting an Agr-less formalism). All these analyses are in keeping with Clement Marot's rule, which states that for agreement, there must be a hierarchical relationship that, in the unmarked cases at least, is reflected in surface linear order: 'the configuration in which agreement (and Case) on the verb and object is checked is one where the object precedes the verb' (van Gelderen 1997: 35).

Accordingly, participle agreement with lexical DOs – which follow the verb in Romance – is excluded in most Romance languages, since it is more marked (Belletti 1990: 143–4). However, this kind of agreement does occur in a minority of Romance varieties, exemplified in (2) with Neapolitan (Loporcaro 1998: 68–9; Ledgeway 2000: 306):

- 2 addʒə kəttə / \*kwəttə a pastə  
 I-have cooked.f./ cooked.m. the.f.sg. pasta.f.sg.  
 'I've cooked the pasta'

In this case, agreement with lexical DOs must be accounted for by assuming some special mechanism, such as right dislocation with subsequent deletion of a DO clitic, as proposed by Kayne (1989a: 96).<sup>2</sup> In other analyses, some other syntactic entity is postulated, such as the abstract object *pro* in SpecAgrOP in Egerland (1996: 86), followed by Manzini and Savoia (2005, II: 561). The *ad hoc* nature of the proposal is all the more striking if one considers that van Gelderen (1997: 35) assumes an abstract object *pro* to derive *lack* of agreement with lexical DOs in the standard case.

The idea that participle agreement with lexical DOs is somewhat problematic is but one specific aspect of the general issue of the configurational definition of GRs, which have no primitive status in the Chomskyan paradigm, even though in recent typologically oriented minimalist literature a sort of nostalgia for GRs seems to be creeping in:

<sup>2</sup> See Loporcaro (1998: 204–5) for a refutation of the right dislocation analysis.

I will use the cover term SUBJ... to refer to the argument that is introduced by Merge at the highest position in a given clause... and OBJ... for the argument that is introduced at the lowest position in the clause. ... According to this definition of SUBJ/OBJ, there occur cases where SUBJ and OBJ do not match with the conventional/intuitive use of subject and object, which is determined by the GR that each argument is supposed to bear.  
(Ura 2000: 30)

However, as is apparent from the definitions, GRs are still subservient to configurational positions.

### 3. 'Morphological' rules for past participle agreement

Linear order, as reflected in hierarchical phrase structure, is central also to the comparative account of participle agreement in French and Italian put forward by Guasti and Rizzi (2002). Their analysis, however, differs from Kayne's (1989a) in an interesting way. Taking a sociolinguistically realistic stance, Guasti and Rizzi (2002: 180) do not just equate French and Italian with respect to the contrast (1a–b), as is traditionally done. Rather, they observe that in French, as opposed to Italian, agreement appears to be only optional:

- 3 a La macchina, l' ha messa/\*messo in garage (It.)  
     b La voiture, il l' a mise/mis dans le garage (Fr.)  
        the.f. car     he it.f. has put.f./put.m. in the garage  
        'The car, he put it into the garage'

This contrast is viewed in light of a general principle stating that '[i]f a feature is checked in the overt syntax, then it is expressed in the morphology', whereas '[t]he system ... says nothing about the case in which a feature is left unchecked in the overt syntax and is to be checked in covert syntax ... Whether a feature is morphologically expressed or not in this case is a property of the language-specific system of morphological rules' (Guasti and Rizzi 2002: 178). The idea is that participle agreement in French is the product of such a morphological rule, while in Italian it is a true syntactic phenomenon driven by Case-checking in the overt syntax.

Independent evidence for the contrast between morphological vs syntactic participle agreement in French vs Italian comes from the mutual ordering of *tutto/tout* and the participle:

- 4 a Gianni ha [AGRP capito [PrtPP tutto [VP t ] ] ] (It.)  
     b Jean a [AGRP [PrtPP tout compris [VP t ] ] ] (Fr.)  
        John has understood everything understood  
        'John has understood everything'

On this evidence, one can conclude that 'the participial verb moves up to the relevant Agr head in Italian, thus bypassing the position filled by *tutto/tout* ...

while it stops in a lower position ... in French' (Guasti and Rizzi 2002: 180). This explains categorical object agreement in Italian, where the syntactic condition is met, in contrast to its optionality in French, where the participle is not high enough to undergo 'syntactic' agreement (under UG guidance), but is only liable to optional 'morphological' agreement.

A morphological rule of the same kind is held responsible for participle agreement with lexical DOs in such varieties as Neapolitan (cf. 2) or 'a very archaic-sounding variety of formal Italian' (Guasti and Rizzi 2002: 181):

- 5 Gianni aveva già presa la sua decisione  
 Gianni had already taken.f.sg. the.f.sg. his.f.sg. decision.f.sg.  
 'Gianni had already taken his decision'

Here, too, it is argued that 'UG does not enforce the morphological expression of agreement, as the feature is unchecked in the overt syntax (because the object has not overtly moved to the relevant Spec); however, nothing excludes expression, if the language has a specific morphological rule to this effect' (Guasti and Rizzi 2002: 181).

The two empirical domains pointed to by Guasti and Rizzi are indeed crucial for a general account of Romance participle agreement. As for agreement with lexical DOs, like the earlier approaches in §2, they take it to be structurally marginal: in earlier accounts, it was regarded as the product of some marked syntactic strategy (e.g. dislocation); here it is expunged from syntax altogether and relegated to 'morphology'. The same goes for agreement with DO clitics in French. The two empirical issues are part, respectively, of what I will call the 'rearguard problem' (to be addressed in §5) and the 'vanguard problem' (to be addressed in §7).

#### 4. Romance past participle agreement: a Relational Grammar account

Table 12.1 reproduces the overview of the analysis of Romance participle agreement proposed in Loporcaro (1998: 243).

The scheme rests on dialect comparison: the abbreviations (see list pp. xiff.) on the top line stand for different Romance varieties that exemplify distinct structural options. The scheme also has an immediate diachronic reading, inasmuch as it describes the structural steps of the progressive fading of participle agreement from Latin to modern Romance varieties. The longer strip in the middle corresponds to the simplest, and most inclusive, condition: the agreement controller is a DO, with no further specification, where DO has to be construed in the broader sense defined by Perlmutter's (1978) Unaccusative Hypothesis. Given a rule consisting solely of this condition, participle

Table 12.1 *Overview of Romance past participle agreement*<sup>3</sup>

Romance varieties													
Conditions		Nap.	It.	Friul.	Mil.	Amp.	Sar.	Per.	Gri.	Fas.	Fr.	Cat.	Sp.
<u>incipit</u> ↑	2 initialized by the PtP										+		
	P-initial 2 of the PtP								+	+	0	+	+
	a P-initial 2 in the clause							+	0	0	0	0	0
	the first 2 in the clause						+	0	0	0	0	0	0
the controller is a 2		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<u>explicit</u> ↓	ex 2		+	(0)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	non-acting-2			(+)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0
	final 1												+
<u>global</u>	non-multi-attached			(+)		+				+		+	+
	transitive 2											+	+

<sup>3</sup> Symbols are to be understood as follows: + = the relevant condition applies; (+) = applies optionally; 0 = is subsumed under a more restrictive condition.

is just a collection of morpho-syntactic features:<sup>4</sup>

7	a	1	P	2	b	1	P	2
		1	P	Cho		1	P	
		Maria	ha	visto		1	P	Cho
		'Mary has seen the house'				Maria	l'ha	vista [3f.sg.]
						'Mary has seen.f.sg. it'		

periphrases:

8 IN EA PROVINCIA PECUNIAS MAGNAS COLLOCATAS HABENT  
in that province monies large placed they-have  
'They have considerable monies invested/have invested considerable monies in that  
province'

(Cicero, *Pro Lege Manilia* 18)

and Savoia 2005, II: 560), as well as in some dialects of Occitan and Catalan,

<sup>4</sup> Within the framework of Relational Grammar, Romance participle agreement was analysed in, for example, Perlmutter (1989), La Fauci (1988, 1989), La Fauci and Loporcaro (1989, 1993). For the present paper, no in-depth familiarity with the model is assumed. All relevant notions will be introduced explicitly. In the diagrams in (6)–(7), **1** = subject, **2** = direct object, **P** = predicate, **Cho** = *chômeur* ('the relation held by a nominal that has been ousted from term status' (Blake 1990: 2)). The *chômeur* relation is extended to predicates under Davies and Rosen's (1988) 'Predicate Union', the formalism adopted here.

participle agreement still obeys only this condition. This is the rearguard in the platoon of the Romance languages as far as this syntactic phenomenon is concerned, and we have seen that agreement with lexical DOs poses some problems for the analyses reviewed in §2. Within the approach outlined in Table 12.1, the solution to these problems is readily available. To see this, it is first necessary to elaborate on the architecture of Table 12.1. From the structural backbone (the DO-condition), which excludes agreement with arguments that do not bear the DO relation (basically, transitive and unergative subjects, occurring in (6a), (7a–b)), there stem three ribs (the scheme should actually be three-dimensional):

- 9 a INCIPIT CONDITIONS: conditions on the start of the agreement controller's career ('the sequence of relations borne by a nominal in a clause', Perlmutter 1990: 1)
- b ÉXPlicit CONDITIONS: conditions on the end of the agreement controller's career (N.B.: Lat. *explicit* 'conclusion')
- c GLOBAL CONDITIONS: conditions that have scope on the entire structural representation.

The increase in restrictiveness of the past participle agreement rule across Romance can be modelled effectively through the progressive addition of further conditions along the three dimensions in (9a–c).

## 5. The rearguard problem

Let us start from the end, which I label the *explicit* or conclusion of the controller's career. The structural trajectory of the gradual retreat of participle agreement in Romance began on this front. A DO may end up within clause structure in different ways:

<b>10</b> Possible <i>explicit</i> s:				i. Neapolitan	ii. Italian	iii. Sardinian	iv. Spanish
a	2	=	2	+	–	–	–
b	2	→	Cho	+	+	–	–
c	2	→	Ø	+	+	+	–
d	2	→	1	+	+	+	+
[+ = controls agreement]				2	ex-2	non-acting-2	final 1

If no syntactic process applies (cf. 10a), it will stay as such until the final stratum, as in (7a), a plain transitive construction with lexical DO. On the other hand, if syntactic processes do apply, an initial 2 can be put *en chômage* (cf. 10b), in case some other argument takes over the 2-GR; or it can be deleted (cf. 10c), if the 2-relation is initially borne by a pronominal clitic, as shown



in (7b); or, finally, it can undergo (passive or unaccusative) advancement to 1 (cf. 10d; further options, such as demotion to indirect object, are not germane to our discussion of participle agreement). Among the options in (10a–d), an implicational relationship seems to hold in terms of participle agreement, as shown by the columns (10i–iv). These are exemplified empirically by the varieties listed and are formally defined by the (*explicit*) conditions mentioned underneath. If a final DO (cf. 10a) controls participle agreement in a given Romance variety (as indicated by the plus in the first row), then this is also true of all other configurations in (10b–d). This is the case in Neapolitan, where the participle agreement rule simply imposes the condition ‘the controller is a 2’ (cf. 10i). Conversely, if a final subject controls agreement (cf. 10d), this does not imply anything as regards the (non-)occurrence of agreement with final 2s, 2-chômeurs and DO clitics. In Spanish (cf. 10iv), passive subjects control participle agreement, and passive is the only construction (among those considered here) in which participle agreement has survived into the present-day language.<sup>5</sup>

However, with Spanish (and the same goes, within Italo-Romance, for Sicilian and southern Calabrian; cf. Loporcaro 1998: 161–70), we have touched upon the forefront of the reduction of participle agreement, to which we shall return in §7. Returning now to the rearguard, in the Latin-Romance transition, agreement obeyed a condition of the Neapolitan kind (cf. 10i), inherited from Latin (cf. 8). Then, agreement became increasingly more restrictive, by first imposing further requirements on the end of the controller’s career. The first step was (10ii): the controller must now be an ex-2, at first only optionally, as testified by variation in the early Romance texts here exemplified with Old Tuscan (cf. 11) and Old French (cf. 12):<sup>6</sup>

- 11 a se tu hai trovati o veduti in questa mattina di questi uccelli  
if you have found.m.pl. or seen.m.pl. in this morning of these birds.m.pl.  
‘if you found or saw such birds this morning’

(*Novellino* 827)

- b i ho veduto cosa che molto mi dispiace  
I have seen.m.sg. thing.f.sg. that much me=displeases  
‘I saw something that very much displeases me’

(*ibid.* 857)

<sup>5</sup> Lack of participle agreement with the argument of unaccusatives in Spanish is described by the condition [transitive 2] in Table 12.1.

<sup>6</sup> La Fauci (1988: 91; 1989: 227) formalized this early step in the retreat of participle agreement by means of a condition referring to the final stratum of the P-sector of the agreeing participle (P-final intransitivity), rather than to the entire clause (a P-sector being defined as the set of strata in which a given predicate bears the P-relation; cf. Davies and Rosen 1988: 57). The alternative formulation in (10ii) has empirical advantages (described in Loporcaro 1998: 234–5) and further makes it possible to directly encode the implicational relationships, since all notions involved in (10) refer to the controller.

- 12 a *el chief li a embatue l'espee*  
 on-the head to-him= he-has beaten the-sword  
 'he<sub>i</sub> beat his<sub>i</sub> sword onto his<sub>i</sub> head'

(*Chastelaine de Vergi* 919–20)

- b *j'ai creü vostre parole*  
 I-have believed.m.sg. your word.f.sg.  
 'I've trusted your word'

(*ibid.* 582)

Some modern Romance varieties are still at this stage today, as illustrated in (13) by Pèrigourdin (cf. Miremont 1976: 53–5):

- 13 a *Avem fach/facha la paz*  
 we-have made.m./made.f. the.f.sg. peace.f.sg.  
 'We made peace'
- b *An barrat/barradas las fenestras*  
 they-have bolted.m./bolted.f.pl. the.f.pl. windows.f.pl.  
 'They bolted their windows'

Summing up, the solution to the rearguard problem is indeed elementary. Under the analysis in Table 12.1, participle agreement with the lexical DO is marginal, if at all, only in a diachronic and geographical sense: historically, it disappeared very early on in most Romance varieties, and geographically, as a consequence, it is restricted to just a few modern Romance dialects. But in these dialects this kind of agreement is in no way *structurally* marginal, unlike what is predicted by the approaches in §§2–3 above. Moreover, these approaches all lump together the archaic agreement with lexical DOs in Modern Standard Italian (cf. 5) with that of conservative dialects like Neapolitan. Under my approach, by contrast, the Neapolitan case (cf. 14a) has to be carefully distinguished from the Occitan one, where the [ex-2] condition is still optional, as shown by the parenthesized [(ex-2)] in (14b), and also from Modern Standard Italian (cf. 14c), where the [ex-2] condition is categorically at work:

- |      |  |                                   |          |
|------|--|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 14 a | the agreement controller is a 2              | Neapolitan                        | (cf. 2)  |
| b    | the agreement controller is a(n ex-2)        | Pèrigourdin                       | (cf. 13) |
| c    | the agreement controller is an ex-2          | Standard Italian                  | (cf. 7a) |
| d    | the agreement controller is a (non-acting-)2 | Castrovillarese (CS) <sup>7</sup> |          |
| e    | the agreement controller is a non-acting-2   | Sardinian                         | (cf. 27) |

<sup>7</sup> Castrovillarese is analysed in Loporcaro (1998: 111–13), based on data from Pace (1993–4). The syntactic condition at work in this dialect, as well as in Sardinian, i.e. (10iii), was proposed in Loporcaro (1998: 234–5) to subsume the two more specific conditions [finally intransitive] and [non-chômeur] from the earlier RG literature (e.g. La Fauçi and Loporcaro 1993: 163). Under earlier analyses, the [(P-)finally intransitive] condition would bar participle agreement with the initial (and final) DO in a transitive construction like (7a), whereas [non-chômeur] would prevent the participle from agreeing with the initial DO (and final chômeur) in indirect transitive reflexives (cf. 25c). Varieties such as Castrovillarese, in which (non-)agreement in the two contexts co-varies, provide

Once these premises have been laid, the ‘archaic’ agreement in (5) can be viewed in a different light. If a speaker of Modern Standard Italian produces in speech (or, better, in writing) (5), s/he is not playing around with morphology without syntactic guidance, as proposed by Guasti and Rizzi (2002). Rather, s/he is deliberately using the syntax of a diachronic dialect from some centuries ago, as though the syntactic change (14b) > (14c) had not occurred. This is in fact what Italians have been doing for centuries, whenever they want to sound elegant: they use archaisms, not just in syntax but in all structural domains.

## 6. Participle agreement in Neapolitan: syntax and morphology

Let us now take a closer look at Neapolitan, which I have been considering up to now in a rather idealized way, based on work with informants for whom participle agreement with lexical DOs is the only grammatical option, as shown in (2) above (the same goes for Ledgeway’s (2000) informants). This is probably a rather conservative variety, just like the variety of French in which the participle obligatorily agrees with DO clitics (as opposed to the optionality in 3b). Fieldwork with less conservative informants in Naples, however, may yield a fuzzier picture, as is the case for Vitolo (2005: 149, 155), who reports systematic vacillation of agreement, both with lexical ((15)) and with clitic DOs ((16)):

- 15 a an'donjə a kottə/kwottə a pastə  
Antonio has cooked.f./cooked.m. the.f.sg. pasta.f.  
‘Antonio has cooked the pasta’
- b ma'riə a kottə/kwottə e 'vrwökkələ  
Maria has cooked.f./cooked.m. the.m.pl. broccoli.m.  
‘Maria cooked the broccoli’
- 16 a a pastə l annə kottə bbənə  
the.f.sg. pasta.f. it.f.sg.= they-have cooked.f. good.f.  
‘The pasta, they cooked (it) well’
- b e 'vrwökkələ l annə kottə/kwottə bbwonə  
the.m.pl. broccoli.m. them.pl.= they-have cooked.f./cooked.m. good.m.  
‘The broccoli, they cooked (it) well’
- c u tsukə l addʒə kottə bbwonə  
the.m.sg. sauce.m. it=I-have cooked.f. good.m.  
‘The sauce, I cooked (it) well’

At first sight, this more innovative variety seems to combine the morphological agreement rules that Guasti and Rizzi (2002) posit for both Italian

evidence in favour of the condition [non-acting-2] (the notion ‘acting term’ corresponds to a term GR – 1, 2 or 3 – plus the respective *chômeur*; cf. Blake 1990: 137). It also allows us to formalize the implication linking this condition with the remaining ones listed in (10i–iv).

(compare (15) with (5)) and French (as (16) parallels (3b)). Let us then check whether Guasti and Rizzi's (2002) approach can be extended to Neapolitan. In particular, if their analysis of French were on the right track, we should expect variable lack of agreement with clitics to indicate a lower structural position of the participle. This predicts that Neapolitan *tuttə* 'everything' should behave syntactically like French *tout*, and unlike Italian *tutto*. This prediction, however, is not borne out by the data:

- 17 kill a kapitə tutt e kkill a:tə nunn a kapitə njentə  
 that-one has understood all and that-one other not has understood nothing  
 /\*a tuttə kapitə  
 has all understood  
 'He understood everything and the other one didn't understand anything'

This means that the alleged cause for variability in agreement with DO clitics for French (the higher position of the participle) cannot be extended to Neapolitan. We have to look for another cause, which becomes available under a different view of the morphology–syntax interplay. Under this view, there is a syntactic rule of participle agreement, which consists of parametric choices according to the dimensions illustrated in Table 12.1. This syntactic agreement must then be expressed with the morphological means available in the system, which in Neapolitan, as in all the dialects of the Upper South, are quite scarce, as regular participles no longer inflect for gender and number after the merger of final vowels. Thus, if in (2) or (15)–(16) the synonymous weak form *kufutə* 'cooked.m./f.' (invariable) had occurred, agreement would have been left unexpressed. Only a subset of irregular, root-stressed participles still show agreement as a by-product of metaphony: this is the case for *kwottə/kottə* 'cooked.m./f.', as well as for a handful of other strong participles including, among others, *ruttə/rottə* 'broken.m./f.', '*vippətə/veppətə* 'drunk.m.f.'.

Now, there are dialects of the Upper South such as Altamurano (BA) in which, despite these scanty morphological means, agreement remains quite stable:

- 18 a aɟɟə kottə/\*kwettə la past  
 I-have cooked.f./cooked.m. the.f.sg. pasta.f.  
 'I cooked the pasta'  
 b aɟɟə kwett/\*kott u bbroɟt  
 I-have cooked.m./cooked.f. the.m.sg. broth.m.  
 'I cooked the broth'
- 19 a la pastə l aɟɟə kottə/\*kwett  
 the.f.sg. pasta.f. it= I-have cooked.f./cooked.m.  
 'The pasta, I cooked (it)'  
 b u bbrotə l aɟɟə kwettə/\*kott  
 the.m.sg. broth.m. it=I-have cooked.m./cooked.f.  
 'The broth, I cooked (it)'

Significantly, in Vitolo's (2005) study of Campanian dialects, the same situation is reported for smaller villages such as Castiglione del Genovesi (cf. (20–21) from Vitolo 2005: 149, 154), whereas larger towns like Salerno show greater vacillation parallel to Naples (cf. Vitolo 2005: 147, 152):

- 20 a n'dɔnjə ε kkɔttə a pastə  
Antonio has cooked.f. the.f.sg. pasta.f.  
b mariə ε kkwɔttə e 'vrwɔkkələ  
Maria has cooked.m. the.m.pl. broccoli.m.
- 21 a a pastə l ɛnnə kɔttə bbɔnə  
the.f.sg. pasta.f. it=they-have cooked.f. good.f.  
b e 'vrwɔkkələ l ɛnnə kwɔttə bbwɔnə  
the.m.pl. broccoli.m. them= they-have cooked.m. good.m.

Consequently, in the same dialect area there are varieties in which any DO (whether a clitic or lexical) still categorically controls agreement. If one could show that Neapolitan is, syntactically, the same kind of system, this analysis would *a priori* be more plausible than an alternative one that takes the variation in (15)–(16) to mean that in Neapolitan the syntax of participle agreement is just like, say, spoken Catalan, where DO clitics no longer categorically control agreement (cf. Cortés 1993: 205). The latter hypothesis would imply that Neapolitan diverges radically from the neighbouring dialects of the Upper South, whereas the former would allow us to maintain areal coherence. There are indeed solid arguments in favour of the former view. Firstly, there is still evidence from more conservative varieties of Neapolitan, including written literary Neapolitan, as reported by Ledgeway (2000: 306). Secondly, for the vacillation in (the manifestation of) agreement reported by Vitolo (2005) there is a straightforward extra-syntactic reason. In fact, that variation cannot be legitimately conceived as signalling [ $\pm$ agreement] with the DO. This could be the case in (15a), where the DO is feminine, but in (15b) and (16b–c) the DOs are masculine (*u tsukə* 'the sauce', *e 'vrwɔkkələ* 'the broccoli'), such that both participle agreement and non-agreement should be expressed by *kwɔttə* 'cooked.m.' (even in the conservative dialects of the area participle agreement is never overtly manifested with masculine DOs). As a consequence, what one finds in (15b) and (16b–c) turns out to be just free variation of two forms (*kɔttə*/*kwɔttə*) to be accounted for in the morpho-phonology.

The reason for this variation lies in an on-going change in the urban dialects of Campania. We have seen that the (residual) signalling of participle agreement all over this dialect area (Upper South) is contingent upon the stressed vowel alternations brought about by metaphony. Over the past few decades, metaphonic alternations have been increasingly lost, in that the metaphonic forms, which are more radically distinct from their Standard Italian counterparts, are

being gradually replaced by non-metaphonic ones. Thus, *kworvə* ‘raven’, *mwortsə* ‘bit’, *mjerlə* ‘blackbird’ are being replaced by *kərvə*, *mərtsə*, *mərlə* and the like.<sup>8</sup> The change spreads via lexical diffusion and, as an intermediate stage, it induces the kind of free variation observed in participial morphology in (15)–(16) between [ $\pm$ metaphonic] forms. All this has nothing to do with syntax, although this morpho-phonological change affects the (residual) surface manifestation of agreement. Syntactically, agreement in Neapolitan is still constrained by the simplest condition (the structural backbone in the scheme in Table 12.1), allowing participle agreement even with final (lexical) DOs, although the surface effects of this syntactic rule are increasingly obscured by unfavourable morpho-phonological conditions.

Whether a similar analysis can be extended to French vacillating agreement with DO clitics is an empirical issue that cannot be pursued any further for reasons of space (see Loporcaro, in press). Alternatively, it could be argued that French is undergoing a change by which the condition [final 1] (cf. 10d), preventing DO clitics from controlling agreement, is being added to the rule (at first optionally, as in Catalan). Either solution would be more economical than the *ad hoc* morphological rule postulated by Guasti and Rizzi (2002).

## 7. The vanguard problem

Even neglecting this on-going evolution and considering only the standard language, it is apparent that in French, unlike in Neapolitan, not only has the morphology of agreement been eroded, but also the syntactic conditions on participle agreement have become more restrictive, independently of morphology. This can be seen by the overview in Table 12.1, in which French reaches the highest point along the parameter of the conditions constraining the start of the controller’s career (the *incipit* conditions listed in Table 12.2 below). Consider the ungrammaticality of agreement in causative constructions, exemplified for contemporary French in (22a):

- 22 a (Marie) ce garçon l’ a fait/\*-e tomber  
 (Mary) this boy her= has made.m./made.f. fall.inf.  
 ‘(Marie) this boy made her fall’
- b La simplicité des lois les a faites souvent méconnaître  
 the simplicity of-the laws them= has made.f.pl. often overlook.inf.  
 ‘The simplicity of the laws has often resulted in their being overlooked’  
 (Montesquieu)

<sup>8</sup> This is the general trend, as reported in Del Puente’s (1995) sociolinguistic study of the retreat of metaphony in Naples. In some cases, it is the metaphonic form that becomes generalized, such as *‘mwonəkə* ‘monk’ replacing the original *‘mənəkə*, where *-a-* historically blocked metaphony (Del Puente 1995: 55), thus generalizing the diphthong that had regularly arisen in the plural *‘mwonətʃə*. In any case, the result is the demise of metaphonic alternations.

Again, if participle agreement in French were just a matter of morphological optionality, it would be unclear how the ungrammaticality of agreement in (22a) could be explained, since the relevant morphology is still there, *fait/faite* being a strong participle. Yet agreement in causatives was grammatical until the mid eighteenth century (cf. 22b) and only became ungrammatical subsequently. Clearly, whatever happened here must have happened in the syntax, independently of morphology. The syntactic change in question can be represented as the switch from a less to a more restrictive *incipit* condition: for a DO to qualify as a legitimate agreement controller in Modern French, it must be the DO *initialized* by the participle that has to agree (as proposed by La Fauci 1988; 1989).<sup>9</sup> This is not the case in causative constructions – as apparent from the structural representation of (22a) in (23) – since the DO of the participle is inherited from the previous P-sector and initialized there by the initial predicate. Hence, the nominal *ce garçon*, not being the initialized 2 of the causative participle, cannot control agreement of the latter:

23

			P	2
	1		Cho	2
	1	P	Cho	2
ce garçon	l'a	fait	tomber	[3f.sg.]

French is usually considered less restrictive than Spanish or Portuguese with regard to participle agreement, which is surely correct on the whole. However, discerning the two classes of *incipit* vs *explicit* conditions in (9a–b) permits a more accurate statement: Spanish (like Portuguese, Sicilian, etc.) is more restrictive than French with regard to *explicit* conditions, as is immediately apparent from Table 12.1, but is indeed less restrictive than French with regard to *incipit* conditions. In fact, the [initialized 2] condition, which excludes agreement in French causatives, is not at work in Spanish or Portuguese, nor in the dialects of Sicily and southern Calabria where participle agreement works as in Spanish, exemplified with Catanzarese in (24) (Loporcaro 1998: 167; contrary to Spanish and Sicilian, in Catanzarese agreement with a DO clitic is still optionally possible (cf. 24a)):

- 24 a a pittfuliqz,a ɔn l ava ma hattu/-a tʃandʒira  
the.f.sg. little-girl not her= he-has ever made.m.sg./f.sg. cry.inf.  
‘(The little girl) he never made her cry’
- b ??a 'littara a'via statu hatta mbukara  
the.f.sg. letter.f.sg. had been.m.sg. made.f.sg. post.inf.
- c \*a 'littara a'via statu hattu mbukara  
the.f.sg. letter.f.sg. had been.m.sg. made.m.sg. post.inf.

<sup>9</sup> Initialization of an argument by a predicate, a notion first proposed by Dubinsky (1985), consists in the attribution of both syntactic GR and semantic role.

Table 12.2 *Incipit conditions*

The agreement controller is:					
a					the first 2
b				a P-initial 2	⊃ the first 2
c		the PtP's P-initial 2	⊃	a P-initial 2	⊃ the first 2
d	the 2 initialized by the PtP	⊃ the PtP's P-initial 2	⊃	a P-initial 2	⊃ the first 2

- d \*a 'littara a'via stata hatta mbukara  
 the.f.sg. letter.f.sg. had been.f.sg. made.f.sg. post.inf. (literally passive)  
 'They had had the letter sent off'

Whereas French lacks participle agreement in causative constructions altogether, in Catanzarese (just as in Spanish) the causative participle must agree in the passive construction (24b; the question marks show that the clause is judged as somewhat infelicitous, because passive is not frequently used, but note that lack of agreement in (24c) or agreement on both the passive auxiliary and the causative participle in (24d) are totally ungrammatical). This is evidence that the *incipit* condition is less restrictive here: unlike in French, it is not required that the controller be the DO *initialized* by the participle, but only that it be *its P-initial* DO.<sup>10</sup> Note that it is not sufficient that it be a P-initial DO in general. This is apparent from the ungrammaticality of agreement of the participle of the passive auxiliary \**stata* in (24d): while for *hatta* the nominal *a littara* is the P-initial 2, for *stata* it is not, in spite of its being a P-initial 2 in the clause (in the previous P-sector). The lesser restrictiveness of systems like Catanzarese (or Sicilian, Spanish, etc.) with respect to French along the scale of *incipit* conditions becomes apparent only in the passive, because Catanzarese has reached the maximum restrictiveness along the parameter of *explicit* conditions, requiring that the participle agreement controller be the final 1. This excludes agreement in all active constructions, even with DO clitics. The fact that Catanzarese (cf. 24a) still permits it variably demonstrates that the [final 1] condition is still optional; its becoming categorical (as in Spanish) thus represents the very last step towards the demise of Romance participle agreement.

## 8. The implicational logic of the conditions on participle agreement

Like *explicit* conditions, *incipit* conditions are also implicationally linked, as shown in Table 12.2 from Loporcaro (1998: 230).

In a discussion of Loporcaro (1998), Rosselló (2003: 359) criticized the notation used in Table 12.2: 'per dir que A està inclòs dins B, posa  $A \supset B$  en lloc de posar, com cal,  $A \subset B$ ' ['in order to say that A is included in B, he writes

<sup>10</sup> The notion 'P-initial  $x$ ' refers to arguments that bear the  $x$  relation in the initial stratum of the P-sector (see note 6) of the relevant predicate.



$A \supset B$  instead of writing, as is appropriate,  $A \subset B$ ']. That the symbol at issue must be handled with care is commonplace in the literature on logic: as Strawson (1952: 39) puts it, '[o]ne might be inclined to ask: since the symbol " $\supset$ " is so apt to receive misleading interpretations... what is the point of introducing it into logic?' As for the specific case, the lines introducing Table 12.2 in Loporcaro (1998: 230) speak of the *set* of agreement controllers that are initialized by the participle as a *subset* of those that are P-initial 2s, and so on. In set-theory notation, the inclusion symbol should indeed have been the reverse. However, what I had in mind, rather, was the value of that sign as 'entailment' between statements ( $p \supset q$ , e.g. 'x is a younger son  $\supset$  x has a brother', Strawson 1952: 39).<sup>11</sup> Consequently, Table 12.2 must be read as introducing a series of entailment relations of the following kind: 'x is the 2 initialized by the participle' entails 'x is the P-initial 2 of that participle' (entailment relations of the same type hold between all the statements in Table 12.2).

The implicational logic of these conditions led to the discovery of some interesting empirical facts. For instance, one can ask the question why, given the set of pronominal verb constructions (i–iii) in Table 12.3, all and only the combinations in (a–d) happen to occur, whereas all the other logically conceivable patterns are unattested (in Table 12.3 and (25), Italian is used as a meta-language).

To see why, consider the structural representations standardly assumed for those constructions in Relational Grammar (see example 25 below).<sup>12</sup>

**25 a direct transitive**

1,2		P
1		P
<hr/>		
1	P	Cho
Maria	si è	vista

**b indirect unergative**

1,3		P
1,2		P
1		P
<hr/>		
1	P	Cho
Maria	si è	sorrisa

**c indirect transitive**

1,3		P	2
1,2		P	Cho
1		P	Cho
<hr/>			
1	P	Cho	Cho
Maria	si è	lavata	le mani

<sup>11</sup> In the syntactic literature, this use of the symbol ' $\supset$ ' is found in e.g. Givón (1984: 19–20).

<sup>12</sup> The representations (25b–c) imply a reflexive  $3 \rightarrow 2$  advancement, first proposed by La Fauci (1988: 82–8; 1989: 224).

Table 12.3 *Participle agreement in reflexive constructions*

		a	b	c	d	*w	*x	*y	*z
i.	direct transitive reflexives <i>Maria si è vista allo specchio</i>	+	+	+	–	–	–	+	–
ii.	indirect unergative reflexives <i>Maria si è sorriso allo specchio</i>	+	+	–	–	+	–	–	+
iii.	indirect transitive reflexives <i>Maria si è lavata le mani</i>	+	–	–	–	+	+	+	–

Combination of these representations with the set of conditions in Table 12.2 generates all and only the attested patterns in (a–d) in Table 12.3. Pattern (a) is the Standard Italian case, where none of the conditions constraining the beginning of the controller's career is at work and therefore agreement occurs uniformly in all reflexive constructions in Table 12.3 (constructions i–iii). Pattern (b) corresponds to Logudorese Sardinian:

- 26 a *maria z es samunaða*  
       Maria self= is washed.f.sg.  
       'Maria washed'
- b *maria z er rispösta*  
       Maria self= is answered.f.sg.  
       'Maria answered herself'
- c *maria z a ssamunaðu zal manos*  
       Maria self= has washed.m.sg. the hands  
       'Maria washed her hands'

For a nominal to qualify as a participle agreement controller, it must be the first DO in the clause as imposed by condition (a) in Table 12.2, which is fulfilled by the final subject in (26a–b) but not in (26c); see the structural representations (25a–b) vs (25c).<sup>13</sup>

Pattern (c) in Table 12.3 is an option taken by several Romance varieties. French is a case in point. As we saw, the French rule imposes that the agreement controller be the initialized 2 of the participle; it also has to be a non-acting-2 (cf. n. 7), along the parameter of *explicit* conditions: these two requirements are fulfilled only by the initial DO and final subject of direct transitive reflexives (cf. 25a), but not by any other of the arguments in the constructions (cf. 25b–c).

The same constellation (c) in Table 12.3 can also be derived through less restrictive *incipit* conditions, as in the Trentino dialect of Pergine Valsugana:

<sup>13</sup> The participle agreement rule for Sardinian also includes the *explicit* condition [non-acting-2] (cf. 10iii, 14e), which rules out agreement with final 2s (cf. 7a) as well as with 2–chômeurs, like *zal manos* in (26c).

- 27 a le putele le s a lavade/\*la'va  
 the girls scl self= have washed.f.pl./washed.m.sg.  
 'The girls washed'
- b la Bepina la s a rispon'du /\*risponduda da sola  
 the Bepina scl self= has answered.m.sg./answered.f.sg. by alone  
 'Giuseppina answered herself'
- c la Bepina la s a mes/\*-a/\*-e le skarpe  
 the Bepina scl self= has put.m.sg./f.sg./f.pl. the.f.pl. shoes.f.pl.  
 'Giuseppina put her shoes on'

While coinciding with French in the syntax of agreement in reflexives, this dialect differs from French in that it does display agreement with the clitic object in causatives (cf. 28a) and agreement of the participle of the passive auxiliary (cf. 28b):

- 28 a (la 'letera) l ɔ fata skriver  
 the.f.sg. letter.f.sg. it= I-have made.f.sg. write.inf.  
 '(the letter) I let (somebody) write it'
- b le matelote l ɛ stade/\*sta kompanade da so  
 the.f.pl. little-girls scl are been.f.pl./been.m.sg. accompanied by their  
 mama  
 mother  
 'The little girls were accompanied by their mother'

Structurally, this means that the agreement controller in Perginese has to be a P-initial 2 in the clause (cf. condition b in Table 12.2), but need not be the 2 initialized by the agreeing participle (as in French). This is shown in (29), the structural representation of (28b), where the nominal *le matelote* is a P-initial 2, but not in the P-sector of *stade* (the participle of the passive auxiliary), which nevertheless displays object agreement:

29	2			P	1
	1			P	Cho
	1		P	Cho	Cho
	1	P	Cho	Cho	Cho
	le matelote	l ɛ	stade	kompanade	da so mama

There still is a further in-between option. Alto Fassano, as described by Elwert (1943: 264–5), has agreement in causatives, whereas the passive auxiliary does not agree:

- 30 a (la 'pitfola) l a fata vepir fɔra de sot  
 the.f.sg. little.f.sg. her= she-has made.f.sg. come.inf. out from under  
 frego'ler  
 fireplace  
 '(The little girl), she made her come out from under the fireplace'

Table 12.4 (Partial) Implicational hierarchy of Romance participle agreement according to construction type

		It.	Sar.	Per.	Fas.	Fr.	* <sub>x</sub>	* <sub>y</sub>	* <sub>z</sub>
i.	transitives with clitic DO <i>Maria l'ho vista</i>	+	+	+	+	+	–	+	+
ii.	causatives with clitic DO <i>Maria l'ho fatta vedere</i>	+	+	+	+	–	+	+	–
iii.	passive auxiliary <i>Maria è stata vista</i>	+	+	+	–	–	+	–	+
iv.	indirect unergative reflexives <i>Maria si è sorriso allo specchio</i>	+	+	–	–	–	–	+	+
v.	indirect transitive reflexives <i>Maria si è lavata le mani</i>	+	–	–	–	–	–	+	–

b    noʃa        vezina                    e    ʃtat    morduda  
       our.f.sg. neighbour.f.sg. has been bitten.f.sg.  
       'Our neighbour was bitten'

This implies that the agreement controller must be *the* P-initial 2 of the agreeing participle (cf. condition c in Table 12.2), rather than simply *a* P-initial 2 in the clause, as in Perginese.

Summing up, the same set of conditions accounts for the occurrence vs non-occurrence of participle agreement *in the system as a whole*, and not just in this or that construction taken in isolation. The formal implications existing between subtly differing theoretical notions such as '*the* P-initial 2 of the participle' vs '*a* P-initial 2 in the clause', and the like, have led us to discover the rationale for some non-obvious (and previously unnoticed) empirical facts, such as the implications obtaining between [ $\pm$ agreement] in, say, causative constructions with a clitic DO (cf. ii in Table 12.4), the passive construction (cf. iii in Table 12.4) and indirect reflexives (cf. iv–v in Table 12.4).

## 9. Conclusion

Whether generalizations such as those synthesized in Table 12.4 (or the preceding sections of this chapter) will hold up to further investigation on (Italo-) Romance varieties is an empirical issue. Until proof to the contrary, the very discovery of these facts bears witness to the effectiveness of the theoretical framework that made it possible. However, the descriptive results thereby attained are not theory-internal. Rather, they challenge alternative views of syntax, such as those discussed in §§2–3. Once again, the study of dialect variation proves to be a great resource for theoretical linguistics, both for synchronic modelling and for the theory of change.